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Editorial: Put down that phone

A new vanity license plate that premiered in January should be considered by Indiana, should the standard plate ever fall out of fashion. The message is that important.

As reported by Ryan Lohman of the South Bend Tribune in his Jan. 18 story, the plates are being presented by the Indiana Motor Truck Association and have a very simple decree: “Put the Phone Down.”

As the Indiana State Police pointed out in the article, distracted driving is a contributing factor in 80 percent of all vehicle crashes. This is a staggering figure considering how recently cellphone, and especially smartphone, technology has been a part of our lives. Your average stoplight is a visual buffet of poor posture as people stare at their glowing laps waiting for the lights to change.

Perhaps you’ve even been one of these drivers.

Here are some more disturbing distracted-driving facts from the Indiana Department of Labor:

STORY CONTINUES BELOW VIDEO

In Other News: Moneyologist: Does My Flip Phone Make Me Look Dumb

• There are now more crashes related to texting and driving than drinking and driving.

• People who text while driving are 23 times more likely to crash.

• Studies have found that your reaction time will be about 30 percent worse if you’re trying to text and drive. You’ll spend an average of 10 percent of your time out of your lane.

• When you look down to send or read a text while driving, you take your eyes off the road for an average of almost five seconds. Doesn’t seem long — but a person driving at 55 mph travels the length of a football field in five seconds.

Not only that, but texting while driving in Indiana can carry a fee of $500 for those caught. Nothing on your phone is that important you can’t wait until you’re stopped, we assure you.